

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 199018

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TSPA, AR

SUBJ: VANGUARD OPERATIONS

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 7187; (B) STATE 192538

1. AFTER THOROUGH AND CANDID DISCUSSIONS WITH NAVAL ATTACHE AND STADIR, NASA HAS CONCLUDED THAT AT-SEA OPERATIONS BEST WAY TO PROCEED AND THAT CHANGE CAN BE HANDLED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MINIMIZE IMPACT ON US/ARGENTINE NAVAL RELATIONS AND PRESUMABLY CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN EMBASSY CABLES.

2. PLANS ARE TO INITIATE CHANGE OCT 6 AT TIME OF NEXT CREW ROTATION. NASA FEELS, AND IS SUPPORTED IN THIS VIEW BY NAVAL ATTACHE, THAT CHANGE EXPLAINABLE ON PROGRAM GROUNDS AND THAT ELIMINATION OF THREE-DAY TECHNICAL CREW ROTATION WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO ARGENTINE NAVY. (THIS ASSESSMENT BASED IN PART ON ATTACHE'S DISCUSSIONS WITH ARGENTINE COUNTERPARTS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR U.S.)

3. PLAN AS EVOLVED DURING DISCUSSIONS HERE DIFFERS SOMEWHAT FROM THAT PROPOSED SEPTTEL. DETAILS FOLLOW:
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A. PLANS ARE TO DISCONTINUE THREE-DAY CREW ROTATION AND INSTITUTE TOTAL AT-SEA OPERATION WITH FULL CREW ON BOARD FOR 25 DAYS AT SEA, AND UP TO 5 DAYS IN PORT FOR RESUPPLY. TIME IN PORT MAY BE REDUCED IF RESUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS EXPEDITED.

B. NO RPT NO MENTION WILL BE MADE AT THIS TIME OF THREAT IN DISCUSSION OF OPERATIONAL CHANGE WITH EITHER CREW OR FAMILIES.

C. EXPECT CHANGE IN OPERATIONAL MODE WILL INFLUENCE DEPENDENTS TO LEAVE VOLUNTARILY.

D. ALTHOUGH NASA PREFERS TO CONTINUE TO USE MAR DEL PLATA FOR PROVISIONING, MISSION SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS MAY REQUIRE CONSIDERATION OF SUBSTITUTE PORT.

4. NOTICE OF CHANGE IN OPERATIONAL MODE WILL BE SENT ROUTINELY BY GSFC TO VANGUARD AND WILL INDICATE CHANGE RESULT OF EXTENSIVE NASA REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND PRESENT BUDGET CONSTRAINTS.

5. AS YOU AWARE, AT-SEA OPERATIONS ARE NOT ONLY A NORMAL MODE OF OPERATING FOR A TRACKING SHIP, BUT WERE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL DURING EARLY STAGES OF CONSIDERATION REGARDING STATIONING THE VANGUARD IN ARGENTINA, AND ARE A LOGICAL EXTENSION OF MANNER IN WHICH ACTUAL OPERATIONS HAVE PROCEEDED. THE SEVERE DEGRADATION OF MISSION SUPPORT CAUSED BY RADIO FREQUENCY INTERFERENCE IN THE PORT MADE IT NECESSARY TO ABANDON THE INITIAL "IN PORT" OPERATION IN FAVOR OF THE PRESENT MODE. IN ADDITION, AS FORESEEN REF B, NASA MUST USE VANGUARD FOR SUPPORT OF AE-C MISSION AS WELL AS SKYLAB. THE AT SEA MODE OF OPERATION WILL BETTER PERMIT SUPPORT OF OVERALL REQUIREMENTS.

6. TO ASSIST VANGUARD TECHNICAL CREW TO MAKE THE NECESSARY CHANGES IN PLANS BENDIX FIELD ENGINEERING CORPORATION IS SENDING B. GALLUP TO MAR DEL PLATA; HE WILL ARRIVE THERE ON OCTOBER 6. IN ADDITION, B.H. MCKEEHAN, FROM NASA'S GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER, WILL TRAVEL TO BUENOS AIRES FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBASSY AND ARGENTINE
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OFFICIALS AS APPROPRIATE. HE WILL ARRIVE ON 8TH AND WILL CONTACT EMBASSY TUESDAY.

7. NASA OF COURSE WANTS TO CONTINUE THE COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES SUCH AS TRAINING FOR CNIE TECHNICIANS ALTHOUGH SOME PROCEDURAL COMPLICATIONS MAY HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT.

8. MCKEEHAN PREPARED PROVIDE ANY FURTHER DETAILS

NECESSARY FOR DISCUSSION WITH ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES. RUSH

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